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A Proclamation agreed vpon by the Iustices

of Peace of this Countie of Bedford, at a generall Sessions holden at Bedford,

the nineteenth day of Aprill, in the xxvii. yere of the Queenes most gracious Raigne,

For the restraint of Wandering Roges and Vacabounds.

WHereas at a generall quarter Sessions holden at Bedford the xix. day of Aprill, in the xxvii. yere of the Queenes Maiesties raigne that nowe is, for the auoyding of Idlenesse, and for the reformation of idle euill disposed Roges, Vacabonds and other lewde persons within the Countie of Bedford, the nomber whereof now of late haue greatly abounded, and daily more and more doe encrease, to the great displeasure of Almightie God, breach of the Queenes Maiesties Lawes, trouble of her louing Subiects, and great hinderance to the impotent poore, whose relefe thereby is taken away, which thing cheifly groweth for want of a conuenient place and meanes to set the said Roges and Vacabonds on worke, and to correct them for their disorders: whereby they may not onely be forced to labour for their owne liuing: but also be kept from their wicked and vngodly course and trade of their wandering licencious and abominable life.

It was agreed and fully concluded by the right Honorable Henrie, Earle of Kent, Henrie, Lord Cheney of Tuddington, Thomas Snag, Sericant at the lawe, Lewes Diue Esquire, and other the Queenes Maiesties Justices of Peace of this Countie of Bedford, then assembled, that according to the intent & meaning of the statutes made in the xiiii. and xviii. yeres of the Queenes Maiesties raigne a house of Correction and Stockes of Wares to set the Idle on worke, and officers and workmen, both to instruct them in worke, and to rule and guide them in good order, should with all conuenient speede be prouided within this Countie, for which purpose there is appointed three Justices of Peace of this shire, to take vppon them the chardge and care to prouide a conuenient house for that purpose, and put the same in order, and to prouide stockes of wares and other things necessarie for the correction, instructing, ruling, ordering, and setting on worke of al such persons as should be cõmitted into the same house by any of her Maiesties Justices of Peace in this Countie. And to that end it was then also agreed, that a taxation should be made within this Countie, according to the statute in that case prouided. Whereupon assesments be made and taxed by the said Justices of Peace thorowe all the Hundreds and parts of this shire, vpon persons most meete to contribute thereunto, for a conuenient summe of money to be leuied for the sayde house, and other the good purposes aforesayd. The sayd Justices of Peace haue thought it good, meete and conuenient, aswell for the furtherance of this good purpose aforesayd, as for the better satisfying of them which be contributors to the same, to giue notice and knowledge to all the inhabitaunts of this Countie, that the said house is at Bedford seen and vewed by three of the sayd Justices of Peace, to be in all respects apt and fit for the purpose aforesayd, which house is appointed to be (by Gods fauour) vpon the next comming, fully prepared and made readie to receiue, correct, order, rule, and set on worke al such vagrant Roges, Vagabonds, and other disordred persons, as shall be sent thither by any Justice of Peace of this Countie, and that the Constable, Tythingman, Hedburroughs, or other Officer, bringing by the warrant of any Justice of Peace of this Countie, any such Vagabound, Roge, or other disordred person, shall receiue at the sayd house of correction of the Keeper of the sayd house, a Penny for euery myle betweene the place where the Justices warrant is made, and the sayd house of Correcteon, as shalbe expressed in the sayd Warrant, towards his charges and paynes in bringing of the same Roge. And the sayd Justices doe also giue notice and knowledge hereby, to all such persons, as being assessed to contribute to this good worke, and doe refuse or delay to pay forthwith to the high Constables or other persons appointed to receiue the summes vppon them taxed, that then the sayd Justices wil forthwith proceede against such refusers, according to the seueritie of the lawes for such penalties and forfaitures, as by their defaults in that behalfe shalbe lost and forfaited, that is to say, for the double value of the summes vpon them seuerally taxed, to be leuied vppon their Lands by distresse or of their goods by saile thereof. And lastly, they also do notifie and make it knowen vnto all the inhabitants of this Countie, that that euery Towne, Village and Hamlet, thorough all parts of this Countie there shal be a strong Watch and Warde kept from Sunne setting, vntill next day at night, and withall a generall and diligent searche made the sayd day at night, and the next day following it shalbe made and continued. In which Searche, Watch and ward, so many Roges, vagabonds, beggers, and other suspicious and vnknowen persons as shalbe found, shall be apprehended and brought before the next Justice of Peace, and vpon examination, to be by him committed to her Maiesties Gaile, or to the sayd house of correction at his discretion, as the case shall require. And for the better preseruing of this Countrie after that tyme, clearly from Roges and Vagabonds, the sayd Justices haue likewise thought good to admonish all Constables, petie Constables, Tythingmen, and other Officers and inhabitaunts within this Countie, to whom it appertaineth not onely diligently and duely to continue and keepe euery night their Watches from the sayd next comming, vntill the feast of Saint Michael next following, in euery Towne, Village and Hamlet, according to the statute of Winchester, vpon the paine therein limitted. But also that there doe no Roge, Vagabond nor Begger after the sayd passe by Day or by night throught any Towne, Village or Hamlet, vnarrested or vnbrought before a Justice of Peace, vpon the paynes limited in the statute in that behalfe lately prouided, that is to say, vi. s. viii. d. for euery default, the same to be leuied by distresse vppon their Lands, or by sale of their goods of euerie Constable, Tithingman or Officer offending in that behalfe. And likewise no person being an Inhabitaunt within this Countie, after the saide next, doe releeue any Roge, Vagabond, or wandering begger vnlicensed, vpon the paine of xx. s. for euery default, to be leuied vpon his Lands or goods, according to the statute in maner and forme aforesaid, which paines and forfaitures certainly shalbe leuied vpon the goods of euerie offender in that behalfe, without mittigation. And for the auoyding of all excuses touching the reprehension of Roges, vagabonds and beggers, the said Justices do further giue knowledge to al such poore persons, as haue licenses to collect the charitable almes of others in any Hundreds or parts of this Countie, yet vnexpired and standing in force (except such as haue lycenses to beg for their houses burnt with Fire) and such as haue lycenses vnder the great Seale of England, that they forthwith seuerally repaire to the Justices of the Limmits wherein they doe seuerally dwell, who will make other conuenient prouision for their relefe, without wandering abrode any more.

God saue the Queene.